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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [UNMIK](#) [YI](#)
SUBJECT: SERBIAN FM PLEADS FOR JANUARY 16 UNMIK MEETING TO
BE OPEN TO THE MEDIA

Classified By: Ambassador Jackie Wolcott, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) This is an action request. See para 6.

12. (C) Summary: On January 4, Serbian FM Vuk Jeremic told Ambassador Wolcott that Serbia has unhappy memories of closed Security Council meetings in 1999 and asked for U.S. support for a public meeting format for the January 16 UNMIK meeting so that President Tadic can appear and speak. Jeremic argued that a public meeting would prevent Tadic's political opponents in Belgrade from using the UNMIK meeting that falls just days before Serbia's presidential election against him. Ambassador Wolcott said the UNMIK meeting's format is still under discussion and asked Jeremic whether Belgrade could accept a speaking role for the Kosovars as part of a package. Jeremic stated that Tadic's priorities are firstly to participate and secondly to have a public meeting. He said he would not like but could probably live with Kosovar participation. Jeremic asserted, however, that Kosovar participation would set a precedent and be the first case since 1999 of Kosovars speaking in an official Security Council meeting dealing with UNMIK specifically. Ambassador Wolcott promised to relay Jeremic's concerns to Washington, saying that the Security Council will discuss the format for the UNMIK meeting next week. End Summary.

13. (C) In a meeting with Ambassador Wolcott on January 4, Serbian FM Jeremic said President Tadic hopes to participate in the January 16 Security Council meeting on UNMIK but asked that the meeting be in the afternoon as Tadic needs to appear at a campaign rally in Serbia late in the day on January 15. Jeremic also stated that Tadic would prefer a meeting open to the media for domestic political reasons because it could help him against Radical Party candidate Nikolic in a campaign that is "a dead heat focused on Kosovo." (Note: The December 19 Security Council meeting on the Troika report was closed to the press and public. End note.) Jeremic asserted that there is much discussion in Belgrade of "doomsday scenarios related to developments in February and March." However, he said, President Tadic is committed to peace and insists there will be no war in the Balkans as long as he remains commander in chief. Jeremic said Tadic wants to deliver to the Security Council a "principled position," speaking clearly about his commitment to peace and stability and the importance of not taking Serbia into further conflict or isolation. Jeremic stressed that there are many unhappy memories in Serbia's "collective conscious" about closed sessions of the Security Council in 1999. He pleaded for understanding that domestic speculation about a closed door UNSC session could play into the hands of Serbia's Radical Party.

¶4. (C) Ambassador Wolcott asked Jeremic if Belgrade would be open to others speaking, including the Kosovars. He replied that Tadic's priorities are firstly that he be able to participate in the UNMIK meeting and secondly that it be public. If a Kosovar representative wants to make an address, Tadic will not like it, said Jeremic, but could live with it, provided it is in an open meeting. Jeremic did argue that the December 19 meeting during which President Sejdiu spoke was a different case because it concerned "a process that clearly had two parties to it," whereas the Kosovars have always been represented in UNMIK meetings by the UN SRSG. Allowing Kosovar direct participation would set a precedent, he said.

¶5. (C) Ambassador Wolcott asked Jeremic what reaction he had received from other Council members about a public meeting. Jeremic replied that he had met with Libya, China, Russia, Costa Rica, Indonesia and Vietnam's missions and received generally favorable reaction. He said his next bilateral was to be with the UK. Jeremic appealed that he knows the U.S. and Serbia have differing views on Kosovo, but said it is critical to limit damage to Tadic in the upcoming election. Ambassador Wolcott asked Jeremic if he would worry that some countries' statements in the meeting could play out in Belgrade to Tadic's disadvantage. Jeremic answered that unless some national statements go "two or three steps beyond known and previously stated positions," then the fact of an open and transparent meeting should still "have a soothing effect in Belgrade." Ambassador Wolcott promised to relay Jeremic's concerns to Washington, explaining that format discussions will continue in the Security Council next week.

¶6. (C) Action Request and Comment: USUN requests Department opinion on a preferred format for the January 16 UNMIK meeting. A speaking role for a Kosovar representative would likely be difficult to achieve Council agreement on. In

arriving at a position, we may need to weigh carefully the cogent appeal made by Jeremic for a format that Tadic apparently thinks will be helpful to him against the risk of a Security Council public meeting that might turn into ill-timed theater. In a preliminary discussion in Council consultations on this issue on January 3, most delegations said President Tadic's formal request to participate in the meeting on UNMIK would have to be accommodated in some way. End Action Request and Comment.
Wolcott